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Notes on chapter on CII of Ph. D. thesis by James Marc Goldgeier, Soviet Leaders and International Crises: The influence of domestic political experiences on foreign policy strategies. (March 15, 1990 approved: George Gessler (?), Philip Tetlock, Kenneth Waltz) (BA Harvard, 1983; Berkeley Ph.D. Political Science

[p. 138: Was it "the Berlin issue" the Soviets wanted to settle? What Berlin issue was there, after the Wall? Was it not "the German issue" (which again, was what? Peace treaty: borders, recognition of GDR? German nuclear weapons? --as Ulam says, and Trachtenberg seems to support) they wanted to settle (now that hemorrhage from Berlin had been stopped)? Would not pressure on Berlin--aided by a humiliating fait accompli and acceptance by US on Cuba, and an improved strategic balance--have been simply an instrument of pressure toward this end?]

[Was K really taking a "reckless" gamble, one almost certain to fail (as well as posing enormous risks and costs if it did fail)? This is a significant issue because it bears on the continuing risks of the nuclear era. Did the risks of the Cuban Missile Crisis stem only from idiosyncratic, unpredictable and very unlikely wild risk-taking by K: or were his calculations such, and realistic enough, to have led to similar behavior in a similar situation by "representative" nuclear leaders?

Bernstein, in the seminar on April 19, emphasized that Sorensen's comment at Harvard that if JFK had foreseen that K would deploy 50 missiles he would have adjusted his warning to permit this ("but not more than 100") suggests that the US military response to K's move was not inevitable: thus, that K's move was not so reckless as commonly supposd. This could also relate to the amount of support that K evidently got for his approach inside the Kremlin; it is less pathological, a product of groupthink or servility to K.

My own interpretation of JFK and McN's private response tothe missiles, JFK's earlier preparations to keep any such information secret before the election, and the chosen timing with respect tothe election, all support the latter inference. K did miscalculate, I think, on JFK's ability to keep the move secret till the election (as well as, perhaps, how soon JFK would find out), but a) again, he was joined in this by all the other Soviets, and (b) it was neither a crazy mistake nor one unlikely in the future: on the contrary, the reality is rather esoteric. (Other countries are likely to be more impressed with the US ability to keep a secret than to possess a good theory of probable leaking).

On actual ablity to collaborate with an enemy, whether secrets are involved or not: a) Reagan's keeping secret its knowledge of

plans to overthrow Solidarity in 1981; b) Bush on Lithuania now, earlier Azerbaijan.

[p. 145-46. Why was K making warnings on Berlin? Was it to warn JFK: if you blockade Cuba or attack Cuban missiles, Sovs will blockade Berlin? The warnings seem to have had this effect! Note that Gromyko came to discuss Berlin/Germany.

The statement to Pitterman, Sept. 17, says "if his November meetings with Kennedy came to naught, then the Su would proceed with the signing to a peace treaty with the GDR to resolve the Berlin issue." What were these meetings to cover? What did "coming to naught" mean? Or was this just a cover, over the real message: don't react to the missiles, or we'll do this?

Was the main purpose of a peace treaty to resolve the Berlin issue, or was this just the most ominous threat that K could make?

On Sept. 18, in interview with a former Belgian economics minister, K said that he would sign a peace treaty (no conditionality here?) "under which Soviet forces would enter West Berlin." But how could this be the outcome of a peace treaty? Presumably under such a treaty Soviet forces would have no new rights even in East Berlin, let alone West Berlin. If Berlin were blockaded after such a treaty, presumably it would be by GDR forces, not Soviet.

--[On October 16, the President "perceived that a crisis was at hand." p. 152. I.e., he knew that he had to prepare the US public and Establishment, including JCS, for giving up the Turkish missiles, at least: which he had installed (not Eisenhower, who had deliberately stalled on these!) He must bring this about, if possible, without losing the 1962 Democratic majority in the House and losing the 1964 election; and without splitting NATO.

To achieve this goal under these constraints, he would have, at least, to blockade Cuba--hopefully, without starting a naval war, and without starting World War III. And he would have to threaten other measures--in part, to keep the final price of getting the Soviet missiles out of Cuba down to the Turkish missiles, not Berlin--which would involve further risks (more, indeed, than he knew in detail). All this involved the possibility that the whole process would get out of control.

The crisis was not defined, I conjecture, by need (supposed by nearly everyone) to get Soviet missiles out of Cuba without any public concessions by the US, such as a trade on Turkey. JFK and McN did not regard that as possible without an attack on Cuba, which they did not want to undertake given the presence of Soviet missiles and the possibility that they might be fired, under US attack, despite Khrushchev's desire not to do so. (McN failed to

imagine that a SAM might be fired even in the absence of violent US attack, merely in the presence of US aggressive surveillance and the Cuban expectation of imminent attack).

Thus, JFK and McN, I conjecture, did not undertake deliberately to accept the risks of WWIII associated with an actual attack on Cuba (once they learned of the missiles), even though they did not expect threats to be effective. (The threats were effective; though they probably would not have been without K's fear that the situation had gotten out of both his and JFK's control, through Castro's independent actions, Soviet insubordination or panicky initiatives, and military pressure on JFK). They expected, rather, to make a deal, to back down, to make major concessions to end the crisis. The evidence of this was closely held at the time, and then kept secret for over 25 years.

--[Had K ever planned to make moves toward Berlin if JFK had threatened, blockaded or attacked Cuba, as he had earlier implied? (Note that US fears about an imminent threat to Berlin--if they did not respond strongly to missiles and block them--had been encouraged, perhaps inadvertently, by Khrushchev's earlier warnings. Thus the stakes for the US had been raised: perhaps inadvertently. Did the Soviets foresee this effect at all? With whom, on the Soviet side, were the Khrushchev/Dobrynin warnings on Berlin discussed?)

In the event, K did not carry these out at all. Had they been pure bluff? Had he--as Mikoyan says--simply failed to consider the possibility of failure, and failed to plan for this? (My assumption that the timing and the threats did reflect some concern about JFK finding out prematurely, contradicts this: unless K was "certain" that this approach would work, covering his risks). Or was JFK's response simply much stronger and more ominous than he had foreseen, so that moves on Berlin simply looked too dangerous? E.g., K evidently never imagined that JFK would not only choose to respond but choose to present this as a major fait accompli, and would succeed in doing so: even though--Mikoyan says--he did suppose that the US could keep anything secret indefinitely, if it wanted. Maybe he thought: secret from the US public: not from me! and Castro! ("He wouldn't want to, and couldn't"). Irony: having chosen to conduct a fait accompli, he seems never to have imagined that Kennedy might try to do the same, and do better at it!

He did, I conjecture, set the stage, make a record, for denying JFK any basis for claiming he had been lied to, or even surprised; yet he lost this attempt, JFK preempting him, capturing the attention of the world with his own fait accompli and defining the situation. K couldn't even change the public declaratory stance of the SU quickly enough to avoid giving the impression to the world that he was "still" lying. (Did he, in fact, "lie" to the world or UN in the sense of the purported Bolshakov message?

And does Bolshakov confirm that this was the message given him? Or did the Sovs--and perhaps even Bolshakov--simply reiterate that the weapons were "defensive"? In any case, JFK had already defined this as a "lie."

Probably K had expected JFK, if he discovered the missiles, either to "ignore" them till after the election, pretending not to have seen them, or to communicate to Khrushchev privately: in which case K would have pointed out that he had, indeed, warned of these, had not lied, had every right, would resist any blockade, etc.

Ask Sovs: had any of them imagined an effort, successful or not, by US to present a blockade or attack as a fait accompli? Did they imagine possibility of an "Acheson strategy," etc.? Or a speedup of Mongoose, provocation; or even, an inadvertent carrying out of Mongoose before discovery of the missiles? Were the combined threats and promises on Berlin meant to avert the latter: to give the Soviets no excuse for pressure on Berlin till after the elections?

April 25: telcon with Goldgeier

Goldgeier compares the domestic bargaining patterns of three Soviet leaders, Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, with their bargaining behavior in international crises. He finds that for each the patterns in these two arenas are very consistent, though the joint patterns differed for each leader. (This finding would suggest that it might be true for Kennedy as well: see the Steel Price crisis, and Fomin's interpretation of it. And for LBJ? It has often been suggested that he expected to apply tactics learned in domestic matters in Congress to his "persuasion" of the North Vietnamese; this time, unfamiliarly, using violence; but then, neither he nor his aides seemed to appreciate the difference this made!)

Thus, for Khrushchev, "it was characteristic for him to prepare a big, dramatic, program that would solve his problems miraculously and cheaply, to be presented as a <u>fait accompli"</u> (!); this was the nature of his virgin lands program, as it was in Cuba II.

What was uncharacteristic for him in Cuba was to back down. G apparently presents no strong explanation for this. An obvious difference is the scale of the stakes involved, the possibility of total catastrophe.

"In one important respect, Khrushchev's behavior in Cuba was not reminiscent of his domestic bargaining style. As events appeared to be edging toward the brink of war, Khrushchev pulled back. ...At home when he was doing badly, Khrushchev had redefined the problem, raised the stakes, and pushed ahead. He had acted

this way at the start of the crisis, but not at the end. He conceded swiftly on October 28, and he suffered for it later. But it was clear that Khrushchev was impressed with the dangers imposed by nuclear weapons, and these caused a shift in in his basic bargaining style as the superpowers approached the threshhold of war." (189)

I suggested--and he found very interesting--another factor: precisely the one he obscured by his inadequate treatment of the shootdown of the U2 and the Cuban antiaircraft firing: the role in this international confrontation of an uncontrolled third party, Castro, as well as insubordinate or inadequately controlled behavior of his own commanders in Cuba. It wasn't just that war was threatened imminently by JFK. In a way that would have been unusual in domestic situations, the process and risks were out of Khrushchev's control.

Moreover, the dangers of attempting a fait accompli in a domestic situation, for a dictator, are quite different from the risks of a fait malaccompli in a foreign policy confrontation; the adversary's power to challenge or counter this, perhaps with massive violence, is entirely different! If K was, in fact, prone to utilize faits accomplis--and the description above makes him sound a little like de Gaulle!--my Theory of the Fait Malaccompli would be immediately applicable.

G admits not focussing on the contribution of the US to the crisis, which he explains by his general focus, in the thesis, on Soviet behavior. Moreover, he agrees that he paid no attention to legalities in the confrontation, on the grounds that these did not seem relevant to bargaining behavior.

But the latter judgment is clearly wrong, since plausible and likely judgments of legality affected many of the calculations of both parties. E.g., the Soviets' judgment of how sharply Kennedy would react once he learned of the presence of the missiles (whether "prematurely" or when told by Khrushchev). ("What can he do, after all?"...without being aggressive, a law-breaker...!)

Note Shaknazarov's pained surprise at realising how little the legalities of the situation concerned the Americans at the Harvard Conference, even 25 years later. Also, the lack of either legal or practical justification for the blockade bears on why the US relied so strongly on the assertion that the Soviets had lied; Ironically, the Soviets seemed to have taken some pains to avert this charge, though they failed to do so.

G obscures the latter point, just as some many Establishment accounts do, by given mistaken examples of clearcut lies by the Soviets. He misquotes Gromyko severely, at least with respect to his memoirs. (Is the Izvestia article any different?) And when

I asked whether Bolshakov confirms in his article the American account of his assurance--that no missiles would be sent that could reach the US--he said yes, whereas Garthoff says that Bolshakov denies this! (So this "assurance", too, may be misremembered and misreported by Sorensen and others!)

As in most official accounts, G alludes to the possibility that the US might invade Cuba only in terms of Soviet and Cuban "fears" and perceptions, not in terms of actual, compelling evidence of this. (G was unaware of Hershberg's work! And, evidently, of Mongoose. Even though this was written after the Moscow meeting.)

In still relying on Horelick's 1964 analysis as "one of the best analyses of why K did what he did" he continues to underrate both the importance of Khrushchev's deterrent motive and the realism of this concern and the evidence of it available to K. This leads to the familiar emphasis on K's "bluster, bullying, coercion"...as if the Soviets were the ones acting illegally, unprecedentedly, coercively, aggressively, or more so.

G started out with an interest in K as a "risk-taker," but lost interest in this approach: apparently because he found it hard to determine (as it is, indeed) whether: a) K saw high risks, and took them; (b) K characteristically failed to see high risks, when he should have: i.e., his recklessness consisted in a biased or motivated underestimation of risks; c) K simply happened in this case to underestimate the risks; or the case I would now emphasize: the risks, though higher than he realized, were not as high as most American analysts presume, and his underestimation of the actual risks was more "reasonable," had more realistic basis, than commonly imagined...

Moreover, in connection with the last hypothesis: I certainly regard Khrushchev as reckless, irresponsible, in a number of ways: but not more so than Kennedy in this case, and not more so than many leaders in a variety of situations.

In any case, I agree that there is a problem to be faced of clarifying just what is meant by describing someone as reckless or a "risk-taker." And G says that he does not really agree with Taubman (139) that it was "quintessentially Khrushchevian" to make a big <u>reckless</u> gamble, an attempt to achieve a miracle on the cheap." G agrees with the latter phrase, but not with "reckless" (though he fails to say this in his text).